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by Daniel J. Callahan

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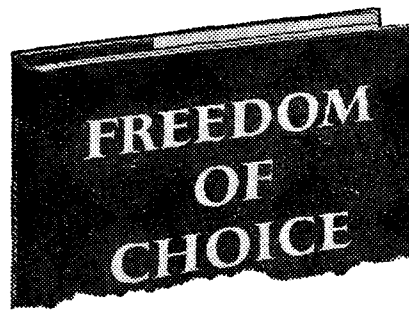
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Volume LXIX, No. 8

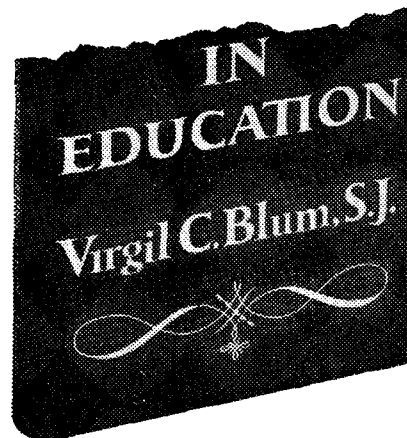
November 21, 1958

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STATEMENT BY THE AUTHOR



IN EDUCATION HAS FREEDOM OF CHOICE BECOME TOO EXPENSIVE?

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THE Commonweal

A Weekly Review of Public Affairs, Literature, and the Arts

THIRTY-FIFTH YEAR OF PUBLICATION

—week by week—

DEMOCRATIC SWEEP

THE ATTEMPT to explain the Republican defeat as a customary mid-term protest against an incumbent Administration has not been widespread. The Democratic margin of victory was too great. Local conditions in hard-hit industrial areas in New England and the Middle West, and in rural areas generally, did have something to do with the result. Republican opposition to depressed-areas legislation and Secretary Benson's unwillingness to change his policies aroused resentment which better business prospects and rising farm prices proved unable to mollify. Except for Nelson Rockefeller of New York, Hugh Scott of Pennsylvania and a few others, however, anti-Republican sentiment was registered all along the line. The result on the whole was a vote of censure for the party in power.

Confidence in the Administration has never fully recovered from the launching of the first sputnik by a Soviet Russia which we had been given every reason to believe was still technologically far behind us. The 1957-58 recession was also blamed directly upon the Republicans, and Washington's refusal to do much more than modify credit policies lost much support. The recession, in turn, cut deeply into tax revenues, so that the Treasury Department finds itself confronted by a twelve billion dollar deficit this year. With tax rates undiminished, a deficit of this size reflects on management in Washington. School integration has also been poorly handled by the Administration.

In the grip of a cold war in an armed world that steadily grows smaller, Americans of every station have increasing concern over foreign policy. The "brinkmanship" of Secretary Dulles, who took his greatest risk over the remote Chinese offshore islands, brought thousands of letters of protest—letters which the vehemence of Mr. Nixon proved

unable to discredit. The demand grew that this country shift its emphasis from the brandishing of weapons to materially increased aid to the underdeveloped lands, as it became more and more obvious that we were losing valuable ground in the cold war.

Hard times in industry and on the farm, the growing Treasury deficit, recurring risks of thermonuclear war, the losses of friends and the weakening of alliances, diffidence of the neutralist nations, diplomatic and other losses in the Middle East and an almost wholly unbroken series of Russian propaganda successes greatly weakened confidence in Washington. Forty-six million voters, a record for non-Presidential elections, turned up at the polls, most of them intent on a change. Except in Arizona the voters poured out their resentments on those symbols of Republicanism, the Old Guard: Senators Bricker, Knowland, Malone, Revercomb, *et al.* The spirit of protest flared high.

WHAT CAN reasonably be expected in the way of changes in the next two years? Mr. Dulles was the first to reassert his faith in a bipartisan foreign policy, not only in his continuing objectives but also in the steps he takes to achieve them. President Eisenhower himself could not figure out what had happened; considering that he favored government economy and was a man of peace, he wondered what more the electorate could want. Furthermore, he raised the specter of wild government spending by newly-elected "radical Democrats."

The fact that both House and Senate are now not far from two-thirds Democratic greatly enhances the possibility of overriding a White House veto. Yet in the matter of appropriations—for distress areas in this country, public housing, educa-

tion, increased expenditures for defense and foreign aid—there remains that twelve billion dollar deficit to contend with. And while the Southern Democrats, who through seniority hold many important committee chairmanships, are now much less important numerically, they will seek to block legislation limiting the filibuster and bills guaranteeing the civil rights of all Americans. Several of the newly elected Republicans can be expected to join forces with their Northern Democratic colleagues on these and other matters.

If Committee chairmanships will largely remain in conservative hands, the new memberships of these House and Senate groups will more nearly reflect the sentiments of the electorate. Here is one avenue of change. Another is opened up by the twelve-point program of Senate Majority leader Lyndon Johnson, (which, however, leaves out action on civil rights). The 86th Congress will find that its efforts will be hampered by existing deficits and fears of runaway inflation. It will have to keep in view shifting developments in the worldwide cold war. Yet it will convene in Washington well aware that the American people are convinced of the need of new approaches to some of their thorniest problems.

PASTERNAKS IN AMERICA

THE SOVIET campaign of vilification against Boris Pasternak, whose *Dr. Zhivago* paints so unflattering a picture of Soviet society, continues to mount in volume and savagery. The horror of the civilized world at this spectacle of intellectual and artistic tyranny also mounts, and the Communists' ruthlessness toward dissenters or non-conformists has been condemned on every side.

Public outrage in the U.S. over the Soviets' persecution of their Nobel prize-winner is felt by Americans of just about every political stripe. There are some observers of the American scene, however, who are as dismayed and disapproving as anyone else over this latest example of Communist brutality but who seize upon it to remind Americans of their own failings in the area of tolerance for unpopular views. It has been suggested that America's treatment of Charlie Chaplin or, even more, of artists and writers who suffered from professional "blacklisting," is much like the Soviet treatment of dissenter Boris Pasternak.

It is true that the phenomenon of blacklisting, with the attendant excesses of super-Americanism and Communist-hunting, marks an unsavory and

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regrettable episode in American life. Careers were sometimes smashed, reputations damaged, the ability to earn a living impaired or even lost, and all this often at the whim of a single "patriot," in or out of government. But these amount to defects in our system; they are not of the essence of American life. Constitutional safeguards and judicial process may sometimes be violated, but these are, after all, violations of the law, not expressions of it.

Although the harm can in some cases never be undone, errors of the past have been and are being corrected by means of built-in Constitutional protections. "Security risks" who were unjustly dismissed have been winning their jobs back, with reimbursement for the financial damage they may have suffered. The Supreme Court has reversed many of the questionable decisions made in the time of the anti-Communist hysteria, and libel suits are still being argued in the courts. Furthermore, the accused in the United States is never quite alone. There are always organizations, publications and individuals to fight for the rights of citizens even in the most unpopular causes.

The case of Charlie Chaplin seems equally inapplicable. Most of the criticism of Mr. Chaplin is wholly unofficial; and, if his critics have sometimes taken the tone or the assumptions of the critics of Pasternak, they are in the minority. (It might also be noted that Mr. Chaplin's strictures on conditions in America lack the reasonableness and the weight of evidence that Boris Pasternak brings forth.) And if Mr. Chaplin has suffered economically for his unpopular views, it is because he has flouted public opinion—a freedom which must always be paid for—not because of any campaign to seek vengeance.

Human beings are all too prone to concern themselves with the motes in the eyes of their neighbors, and it is good to be alert for this weakness. Let us admit our mistakes and—more importantly—try to prevent them in the future. But to compare the pressure for conformism in the United States with the pressure in Soviet Russia is merely to confuse the issue. To suggest that artists in the United States suffer the same restrictions as those in the Soviet Union is irresponsible exaggeration, exaggeration which does more harm than good.

ELECTIONS AND RELIGIOUS BIAS

THERE ARE many reasons to be grateful for the election of Congressman Eugene J. McCarthy as Democratic Senator from Minnesota.

The editors of *The Commonweal* are pleased, of course, to see one of their valued contributors elected to an office which will allow him to exercise more fully his manifest abilities. And, to indulge in the usual political hypostatization, the Democratic Party must be grateful that Senator-elect McCarthy added to the number of Democratic victories. Further, the liberal wing of the Senate will welcome his support and be pleased to know that the name "McCarthy" can have a different ring in the Senate than once it did.

In the long run, however, these partisan interests may be less important than the fact that Eugene McCarthy's victory was the outstanding example of an instructive lesson provided by the entire Congressional election. The lesson can be stated simply: religious bias is, apparently, a constantly diminishing factor in elections of national importance. In the recent election, for example, California and Pennsylvania elected their first Catholic governors, Maine and Minnesota their first Catholic Senators. There were, of course, other Democratic winners who are Catholic but whose elections were less notable.

The instance of Senator-elect McCarthy is the outstanding example, however, because he ran in a heavily Protestant state where, supposedly, suspicion of a Catholic candidate can be almost palpable. Furthermore, he ran against Ed Thye, an incumbent Republican who in two terms had proved himself to be a respectable opponent. The causes which combined to help other Democrats into office also aided McCarthy, of course, but no more than they helped other candidates. He ran and won on his record as a Democrat in the House. If his religion was a political handicap in Minnesota it was, quite obviously, not formidable.

There are immediate political inferences one can draw from such an election. Indeed, they have by this time been so thoroughly examined that one is tempted to say they have been drawn—and quartered. The most insistent note is that a political candidate cannot be counted out of a national contest solely because he is a Catholic. What was once a political adage is, if not entirely discredited, at least heavily discounted.

The political implications are not slight then, and they need not be minimized. But more important is the fact—and it is a fact—that religious bias in the United States is, in some serious aspects, declining. For there is no reason to believe that freedom from religious bias should be limited to Minnesota. The election of Senator McCarthy can be welcomed therefore not only by editors

of The Commonweal, the people of Minnesota, Democrats, Catholics, or liberals, but by Americans generally. For it points to the time when neither ethnic or religious bias will be sufficient to defeat or elect a candidate for national office; when, with due respect to political climate and the democratic process, the best man will win.

JORDAN IN DANGER

TO SAY that the situation in the Middle East is threatening is, unfortunately, merely to belabor the obvious. The situation in the Middle East is always threatening. Yet the latest news suggests that a new flare-up may be building in that troubled area—in Jordan, this time.

While we hope for the best—for the sake of Jordan and King Hussein as well as the strategic position of the West in this area—we should clearly be prepared for the worst. In the light of our State Department's amazed response to the revolt in Iraq a few months ago, we may be permitted to urge a search for a Middle Eastern policy which goes beyond expressing alarm and keeping the marines at the ready.

VOTING ON "RIGHT TO WORK"

JOSEPH ALSOP is clearly no man to kill the Republicans with kindness. In a post-election column he wrote: "The big secret of the 1958 election has been an open secret for a pretty long time in horse-racing circles. In brief, you cannot expect to win many races if almost all your entries are spavined, stringhalted or afflicted with glanders. . . . All across the country, wherever the Republican entry was not visibly ready to be carted off to the knackers' yard, this exceptional animal made a respectable showing or actually won his race." Dropping his horse-racing figure as he warmed to his subject, Mr. Alsop went on: "In Massachusetts, for example, the Republicans seem to have composed their ticket by searching under stones, tracking down creatures that were making odd noises in the wall and other macabre experiments in natural history. The sole candidate apparently chosen on the theory that he might attract a few votes was Christian Herter, Jr. . . ."

With the ashes of defeat still bitter in their mouths, it may be that Republican insiders will agree with Mr. Alsop. To us his views seem unduly hard on many of the candidates who went down to

defeat in the Democratic sweep. What we will never understand, though, is the eagerness with which six of the state G.O.P. organizations tied their fortunes to the abortive right-to-work proposals.

The right-to-work cause has become identified with forces which are completely hostile to organized labor. As a result, union members see the issue in terms of long-range survival, and they see anyone who favors right-to-work as an enemy of organized labor, plain and simple. It is no wonder that in states where right-to-work proposals were on the ballot union men went to the polls in unprecedented numbers to hand right-to-work and its Republican supporters a humiliating defeat. Indeed, if the Republican Party had wanted to insure the widest possible participation by union members, we don't know any other issue which would have been as successful. Why six Republican state organizations insisted on identifying their candidates with a proposal guaranteed to bring millions of union men out to vote against them will always be a mystery to us. Indeed, we have a feeling that Republican tactics in the recent campaign will supply students of the political death-urge with fascinating material for a long time to come.

BUY, BUY, BUY

AFTER ALL the weeks of election talk, we are indebted to the N. Y. *Herald Tribune* for an up-to-date report on what the advertising fraternity is up to. Seems the boys on Madison Avenue are now deep in research on the effect of social class on buying habits, and the subject is more complicated than we would have thought. Take, for instance, the problem posed by two kinds of beer which sell for the same price and are indistinguishable in quality. Working-class people will buy one, "because they don't have to put on a collar and tie to drink it"; middle-class people will buy the other brand "to keep up with their fashionable neighbors." Furthermore, just to make sure the ad men are on their toes, there is always what the sociologists call the "upward mobile" individual; he confuses things by refusing the brand he should choose in favor of a product with "status appeal"—the one he thinks the group above will buy. And then there are the members of the upper class: *they* go in for conspicuous under-consumption—a sneaky phrase used to explain, we suspect, why they read someone else's copy of The Commonweal. Anyway, it's plain to see that life on Madison Avenue is not, if we may use the phrase, all beer and skittles.

Religion and the University

For the past fifty or seventy-five years, agnostics have held a disproportionate position of dominance in American intellectual life

by DANIEL J. CALLAHAN

ONE OF THE fruits of the current religious revival in America or, as C. S. Lewis has called it, the revival of "interest" in religion, is an increasingly severe pressure on our oldest and greatest universities to define more clearly the relationship between religion and education. What William F. Buckley, Jr. proposed in his book *God and Man at Yale* was indicative only of one radical solution to the problem. Others, mainly Protestant thinkers and educators, have been quietly discussing the issue in recent years but, until now, little had been heard from that large group in American education who can, for lack of a less pejorative term, be called agnostics.

The first public sign of real concern which this group has with the probings of many Christian thinkers was the publication and attendant controversy of an article entitled "Religion at Harvard" by a Harvard graduate student in philosophy. If men with a clearly religious interest had not yet made up their minds about the place of religion in the university, it was nonetheless clear that another large and influential group looked upon the religious revival with alarm, and saw it as a genuine threat to their influence and ideals.

One need not be reactionary to say that during the past fifty to seventy-five years the agnostics have held a position of dominance in the upper strata of American intellectual life quite out of proportion to their numbers. In the universities, especially in those few which have turned out a large percentage of our outstanding thinkers, scholars and intellectual leaders, the tendency was for the institutions, *qua* institutions, to give religion a place of prominence only in the commencement ceremonies, official seals, and fund-raising activities.

For while the secularists came increasingly to dominate the important intellectual currents of the time,

those who paid for the schools, administered them, and had a say in the broad aims of the school, were drawn from the most traditional elements of society: the clergy, business leaders, and government officials. With the exception of the former president of Harvard, Dr. James Conant, it is significant that the recent and current presidents of Harvard, Yale and Princeton have been drawn mainly from the most traditional of all the disciplines, classics and history. It is evident that the alumni who pick the trustees and the president represent a different element of American society than those who, on the teaching and research level, shape the intellectual trends of the day.

For this reason it is not surprising that the self-image of our great universities is not very clear. In effect, two different images are constantly being evoked: that of the university as the preserver and defender of a definite set of substantive values (essentially Christian), and that of the university as dedicated to nothing except the free exchange and criticism of ideas. The unhappy task of the university president is somehow to find a way of satisfying both images. The result of this almost impossible task has been, with only minor exceptions, to relegate religion to university ceremonials and public utterances; this satisfies the outside world, gives due weight to tradition, and has no bearing on the activities of the faculty. Still, this way of handling the matter is an uneasy compromise, and some muted conflict has always been present.

UNTIL RELIGION came again into its own there was little danger that believers could in any way upset the compromise. For one thing, religion could not offer talent comparable to that of the agnostic and near-agnostic. For another, religion, beset on all sides by a hundred years of attack, had suffered a "failure of nerve" and simply did not have the drive, self-con-

Mr. Callahan is a member of the faculty at Harvard. This is his second article in *The Commonweal*.

fidence and energy necessary to win for itself a hearing within higher academic circles. But with the close of World War II, religion did take on new life. In Paul Tillich, Reinhold and H. Richard Niebuhr, and Jacques Maritain, American Christianity found new intellectual vitality. And in the general surge of Protestant Christianity on the popular level, a heretofore absent sense of purpose asserted itself. Inevitably, in this atmosphere, the question of what to do about religion in the university came quickly to the fore. It didn't take a very perceptive observer to see that, ceremonies aside, the actual role of religion in the only place where it could make some difference, in the curriculum, was at best negligible, at worst non-existent.

At Harvard especially, the new concern with religion centered first on the Divinity School which was, in an amazingly short time, transformed from a moribund outpost of the university to one of the best in the country. This rapid development, combined with the appointment of an Episcopalian, Nathan Pusey, to succeed Dr. Conant in the presidency and the general (though greatly exaggerated) revival of religion among the students, gave religion a place of prominence at Harvard decidedly in contrast with the pre-war situation. While there was during this period of renaissance an undercurrent of grumbling among many faculty members who were loath to see the corpse of religion revived, the changes were accepted rather wryly as an unfortunate product of the times posing no immediate threat to the separation of religion and education.

It took some time, though not long, to realize that President Pusey takes religion very seriously, has no hesitation about speaking out clearly and unequivocally in its support, nor any hesitation in decrying a trend toward secularism. It was only with the publication of William Bartley's article, "Religion at Harvard," during the Spring Term of 1958, that the discontent of many with the religious revival in general and President Pusey in particular came into the open.

Despite Mr. Pusey's statement in the 1957 Baccalaureate address that, "The people who are speaking for religion in universities today . . . are not asking for special privilege," the dissidents could interpret this "speaking" in no other way. Not only was this purportedly obvious pleading a danger; so too was the type of religion being espoused. The great stress laid on faith, the necessity of commitment for an adequate understanding of religion, and the plaintive emphasis on man's pragmatic need of God during troubled times, were in themselves adequate reason to despair over the re-birth of religion.

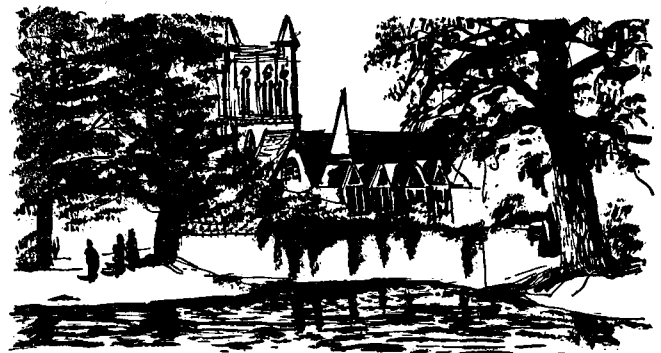
More concretely, the immediate problem raised by the resurgence of religion came as a result of Mr. Bartley's public revelation that a Jewish couple had been denied the use of the traditionally Protestant University Chapel for their marriage. After originally sup-

porting the stand of the University Chaplain that the use of the chapel by non-Christians would be improper, the Harvard Corporation relented under pressure to the extent of permitting, in the future, private services by non-Christians. Although a large number of Christians supported the change, the most irate advocates of change were the non-believers who felt that this was just one more instance of the evils of any sort of religious conviction which introduces "divisiveness" into the academic community. Indeed, so the accusation went, the evil is particularly great when the administration itself is the source of the divisiveness.

By the end of the school year, the lines of further battles were fairly well drawn. The chapel dispute made apparent the strong opposition to any increase in the power of religion on the campus. As a final shot of the year, President Pusey, in his Baccalaureate address, met the opposition head-on by criticizing secularism and advocating in the strongest possible terms a return to religion.

AT THE ROOT of the conflict, at Harvard and elsewhere, is nothing less than the question of the function of a university which opens its doors to scholars and students of all persuasions: committed, uncommitted, skeptical and credulous alike. Though the believer can very handily make use of the fact that our great universities did have a sectarian, religious origin and call upon all to respect and make efficacious this heritage, the agnostic can just as easily point out that, of late, the old tradition has in practice been replaced by a new one: that of the university as neutral among conflicting ideologies and values. As the agnostic would have it, given our pluralistic intellectual life the university's role today is to provide an atmosphere in which the most important of man's questions will in no way be begged by any official stand on the part of the administration.

Naturally, the believer finds this thesis hard to accept; making religion just a "personal" matter, publicly ignored, seems to them a way of begging the question of whether religion is to play a significant part in our institutional goals. Further, to drop all public mention of religion solely in favor of a procedural faith appears to raise non-commitment to the



level of dogma, according to which anyone who utilized freedom to decide upon and implement an ultimate allegiance could be considered a danger to the academic common good.

As long as religion was passive and satisfied with their university ceremonials and seals, there was no problem and no one was greatly bothered by the mixed and often conflicting images of itself which the university presented. But a re-vitalized Christianity is not likely to be satisfied much longer with lip-service within the university. Christians feel, correctly, that it ought to have at least as important a place in the curriculum as does dogmatic agnosticism.

There are those who say that religion, if it has anything objective about it at all, need not necessarily have to be taught by a committed believer, but one can only hope that they will at least allow religion some chance to present itself on its own grounds. At the same time, the Christian must recognize that a university can hardly be expected to call itself Christian when, many of the faculty, students and alumni, are by no means Christian.

In the far-ranging dispute, both sides will have to give way. Those who do not want our *de facto* non-sectarian universities portrayed as bastions of traditional doctrines and values must be willing to give religion (dogmatic included) a larger share of courses, teachers, and professorships—even dedicated and committed instructors and professors. This same group must also be willing to admit that, in most university curriculums, religion is a rarely seen *bête noire* allowed out only under the guise of history, sociology, humanities or philosophy. Likewise, those who want to see religion play a larger role in the academic life of the university will have to cease hoping that religion will be given some kind of increased official recognition as a unifying force in the university. It is not often noted that religion can serve as a bond of unity among believer and unbeliever only by being stripped of all that is vital and essential to it. In a phrase which has general application, two Harvard professors who supported the university's original stand on the use of the chapel said, "any religion is some religion" and a religiosity that achieves a least common denominator is not religion at all.

THE IDEAL pluralistic university is not one which externally professes a religious concern at variance with its actual curricular content. Nor is it one which professes non-commitment and thinks itself thereby justified in excluding religion because it does involve such a high degree of personal commitment. The pluralistic university will function at its best only where there is room for divisions, and factions, for committed and uncommitted alike—with no one view being given official preference.

In a world torn by conflicting ideologies, each with its own pressure groups, the ideal of the completely open university needs to be maintained. At their best, such universities can provide those few places in the world where one can, in relative detachment, attempt to make choices on the basis of a skillful balancing of partisan pressures and arguments. This kind of university is especially necessary for those who, for one reason or another, feel they have no cogent framework in which to do their seeking of the truth. If, as is often said, it is difficult to make fundamental decisions in an atmosphere in which religion is given antecedent preference, it ought still be possible to admit that it is just as difficult to make a choice in favor of religion in the absence of persuaded believers free to advocate and disseminate their views. The essential point is that, in either case, it might easily be possible to make a choice, but difficult to make an intelligent choice.

The position being proposed here is, admittedly, closer to what most agnostics advocate than what many believers advocate. When the agnostic advocates it there are, however, both historical and contemporary grounds for suspecting that this might be just his method of preparing the way for an exclusion of religion entirely. For his part, the Christian might well be satisfied if, in exchange for striking out all reference to God and religion in the official statements and documents of a university, he was allowed to bring in a significantly larger number of believers to do some explicit teaching in favor of Christianity.

But as long as some Christians persist in demanding a favored status, it is likely that religion will continue to slumber in its time-honored role of being something vaguely traditional and, even more vaguely, necessary for the maintenance of good taste. In this role, religion will have all the dubious advantages of a once or twice a year espousal while the non-religious will be free to use the rest of the year as they see fit.

Looking at the X-rays Taken

They have numbered all my limbs,
And come within the skull
To that bright symbol maker;
All this, but only, they
Have found me bone and flesh
And that visionary muscle.

And I have been higher up than Icarus,
And more wise than the generation
Of light, skeletal, synaptic.
Now, if that functioning-flexibly
Cortex will permit, I shall read
The lights and shadows of an ancient verse.

CORNELIA VEENENDAAL.

*In nine of our states the death
penalty can still be imposed for robbery*

Justice by Geography

by WILLIAM H. DEMPSEY, JR.

THE RECENT \$1.95 robbery in Alabama developed into a cause célèbre which, while understandable, revealed again the inexhaustible capacity of the public to be misled by the irrelevant. As every newspaper reader knows, the furor arose over the imposition of the death sentence on a Negro who had robbed an eighty-two-year-old white woman. No doubt her testimony that he also had attempted to rape her affected the severity of the sentence. In any event, the fact that the robber's loot amounted to only \$1.95 caused an international outcry, and the Governor finally commuted the sentence. The surprising aspect of the case is that so many people apparently thought that the unprofitableness of the crime made the death penalty unthinkable. The man was not convicted of mere thievery, it must be remembered, but of robbery. The Alabama law quite reasonably does not distinguish among robbers according to the fortuity of how much their victims were carrying, because the gravamen of the crime is that since it is carried out by force or threat of force, it involves grave bodily danger to the victim.

This episode spotlights an acutely troublesome facet of our system of criminal jurisprudence: the unequal treatment accorded to convicted criminals. In other words, the interesting fact is not that a financially unremunerative robbery should be rewarded with death, but that robbery is a capital crime in Alabama. If this offense had been committed across the border in Tennessee or in any of thirty-eight other states, the death penalty could not have been imposed. But, in an age when only three European democracies still make use of capital punishment (and it is tottering in one of those—England), nine of our states regard robbery with sufficient revulsion to allow the supreme penalty to be enacted.

State criminal codes differ, of course, in respects other than capital punishment provisions. These codes have been developed so haphazardly that they not only are diverse but also perpetuate anachronisms. For example, burglary in Washington must be punished by at least a five-year sentence if committed after twi-

light, but it may draw as short a term as the sentencing authority sees fit if committed a few minutes before twilight. These legislative mishaps, however, though lamentable, are not as significant as diverse laws regarding the death penalty. While lawmakers may disagree in their estimates of proper terms of imprisonment without the public generally much caring, debates on capital punishment are more likely to provoke widespread expression of opinion and hence to reveal important community mores. Furthermore, while probation and parole may reduce the impact of unreasonable laws on the persons convicted, a parole board cannot be expected to do much for a man in his grave. Thus it is interesting to note that four of our states still consider burglary heinous enough to send a man to his death, that five permit capital punishment for arson, and that three allow the death sentence for a person imprisoned for life who commits an assault. In addition, there are the unique excursions of legislators into criminal jurisprudence which produce such oddities as the 1941 Georgia statute providing the death penalty for desecration of a grave with intent to rob or molest the human remains. Many other differences exist among states with respect to capital punishment for crimes such as kidnapping and rape, but the examples given should sufficiently underscore the fact that an offender's life may well turn upon geography.

THIS IS NOT to say that the criminal codes of all states should be identical. In a field as complex as criminal law, latitude must be given legislatures to express their best judgment on their own peculiar problems. But, clearly, existing laws are often not the product of "best" judgment; sometimes one wonders if they are the product of any judgment at all. What is needed is a far-reaching reexamination of criminal statutes on the basis of the up-to-date findings of criminology, sociology, psychology, and allied fields. Certainly our capital punishment laws should be reevaluated in the light of the experience of the countries and states which have abolished the death penalty, for this experience has thrown substantial doubt upon the deterrent effect of the death sentence. And what of the laws which impose criminal sanctions

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without regard to moral culpability? Is it proper, or even useful, to punish as a criminal a woman who remarries when she genuinely but mistakenly believes herself to be widowed or divorced? Questions of this nature are being considered by a committee of the American Law Institute, but it is to be hoped that this work and its end product—a Model Penal Code—will prompt a thorough overhauling of our criminal laws.

But it would be wishful thinking to conclude that reasonable criminal statutes would assure equitable treatment of criminals. Laws are administered by men, and the trend has been to allow the administrator—usually the judge—considerable discretion in imposing sentences so that the punishment may fit the criminal and not only the crime. Regrettably, this grant of discretion seems also to have promoted unevenness in sentencing practices. This is best illustrated by the statistical surveys of our federal courts, which operate under a single criminal code. For example, in several northeastern states the average sentence for forgery during a twelve-month period in 1956-57 was slightly over a year, whereas in a bloc of western states it was thirty-two months. And a North Carolina forger would be well advised to ply his trade in the eastern district of that state, where the average sentence for forgery was sixteen months, rather than in the adjoining middle district, where the average sentence was about twice as long.

Prospective liquor law violators in Tennessee should be similarly warned, for in eastern Tennessee the average sentence for such offenses was only one-fourth the average sentence in western Tennessee. With respect to motor vehicle thefts, the area centering on Illinois boasted an average sentence of about thirty-four months, which was fourteen months longer than that of four northeastern states. And the car thief who is attracted to western Louisiana by the low average sentence of fifteen months for automobile theft had better take care that he does not by mistake purloin an auto in the adjoining eastern district of Arkansas, for there the average sentence is a hefty three years.

ANOTHER INDEX of disparate treatment is the comparative use of probation by the various federal courts. According to the most recent annual survey by the Federal Bureau of Prisons, 58.5 per cent of persons convicted in the Delaware-Pennsylvania-New Jersey region were placed on probation, while only 38.3 per cent received probation in a bloc of six Southern states. There are even more dramatic variations among the individual judicial districts. Thus in the eastern district of Pennsylvania 65.5 per cent of criminals were granted probation, whereas in the western district of Texas only 15.3 per cent received this benefit.

Statistics on the actual execution of the death sentence are also suggestive. It is evident from the com-

pilation of the Federal Bureau of Prisons that the South is one area where capital punishment is not likely to fall into desuetude. The South accounted for about sixty per cent of the 3,219 civil executions between 1930 and 1952, and, with the exception of eight in Missouri, for all of the 366 executions for rape. It is interesting to note that 328 of those executed for rape, or 89.9 per cent, were Negroes. Moreover, all but one of the eighteen executions for armed robbery and all ten of the executions for burglary occurred in the South; twenty-three of the twenty-seven condemned to death for these crimes in the South were also Negroes.

Parole and "time off for good behavior" generally constitute a prisoner's last chance to have an inequitable sentence ameliorated. But again we find differences among states in allowances for "good behavior," in the time various categories of prisoners must serve to become eligible for parole, and in the actual administration of parole systems. This, coupled with dissimilarities in criminal codes and in sentences meted out, produces the inevitable final result: remarkable disparities in the time actually served by prisoners for the same type of offense.

For example, the median time of imprisonment for rape in Wisconsin in 1951, the last year the Federal Bureau of Prisons published comparative statistics, was only one year and six months, whereas in Ohio it was four years and one month. Four years and eight months was the median for robbery in Alabama, compared with one year and nine months in Wisconsin. Medians for burglary ranged from one year and three months in Washington to two years and eight months in New York; for theft, from ten months in Maryland to two years and three months in New York; and for forgery, from one year and two months in Maryland to two years and six months in Illinois.

Of course, carbon-copy treatment of criminals is not the goal. Modern criminology favors individualized sentencing and parole, geared to factors such as extenuating circumstances and prospects for rehabilitation. Still, it is difficult to explain the magnitude of the variations in treatment on this basis. It seems clear that many who should receive similar sentences are being penalized differently. This is not only unjust, but also creates bitterness among prisoners and thus deters rehabilitation. A major cause of the 1956 sit-down strike of prisoners at Connecticut State Prison was dissatisfaction over sentencing inequities. It is no wonder that prison officials are seriously concerned about this problem, but concern by others is long overdue.

THE SITUATION cannot be attributed to the malignity of judges, who almost always dispense justice as they think proper. The trouble is that they think so differently about what is "proper." One reason is their inevitable disagreement about the com-

parative importance of the often conflicting goals of rehabilitation, deterrence, protection of society by isolation of criminals, and retribution. Another reason is that, incredibly, there appear to be no reliable statistics indicating the relative value of various terms and types of imprisonment and techniques such as probation. Thus, whereas a judge should be able to predict with reasonable accuracy the chances of any person's becoming a "repeater" if given a particular sentence, depending upon factors such as age, background and prior record, sentencing is in fact reduced to guesswork. And, naturally, different judges make quite different guesses.

Parole boards are hamstrung by the same lack of statistical data, and may also be hampered by political pressures. The unreliability of a judge's guess is liable to be increased by the absence or inadequacy of the pre-sentencing report. Such a report, made by a probation officer, is essential to disclose the factors bearing on culpability, chances for rehabilitation, and type of sentence best calculated to facilitate reformation. But because of a critical shortage of probation officers—about nine thousand employed as against an esti-

mated forty thousand needed—many judges must do without this assistance.

This list of causes, although by no means exhaustive, suggests some possible cures. Complete statistical studies of recidivism, augmentation of probation officer staffs and elimination of politics from parole practices will help bring rationality into criminal punishment. Gross inequities might be corrected by granting appellate courts the authority to reduce inordinate sentences, and a small minority of our states have provided for such appellate review. It is anomalous that courts of appeal should scrupulously examine cases to prevent unjust convictions but be powerless to consider the often equally important issue of unjust sentences. One prominent advocate of review of sentences cites a one hundred forty-year term fastened on a seventeen-year-old boy for a one-night series of robberies as likely grist for the appellate mill.

Whether these or other remedies are adopted, the one certainty is that we can no longer in conscience ignore the existing mockery of the principle of "Equal Justice Under Law," a principle which must be one of the foundation stones of our democratic civilization.

THE ECONOMICS OF SURVIVAL

Middle Eastern Realities

by JAMES D. PICTON

A FEW WEEKS ago I was clattering along the Nile Valley in an express train that was taking me from Aswan to Cairo. Beside me sat an English friend who had recently arrived from London. He looked forlornly out the train window, at the endless parade of dismal mud-hut villages which house all but a few of Egypt's twenty-three million people, and said he couldn't see how people could live in such conditions. He finished by saying he couldn't wait to get back to the London fog.

I have never seen a Middle Eastern village that actually looked pleasant to live in. The dust and the flies in these villages are almost unbearable for people accustomed to paved streets and modern sanitation. But the people most aware of the ugliness and backwardness of the Arab villages are the Arabs who have moved to the cities and large towns. They look at the village of their past, and at their relatives who have re-

mained there, with a disdain which frequently reaches contempt. They judge the peasants of the villages as filthy, ignorant and of a grade of humanity just a little elevated from the barnyard animals which, they say, the peasants resemble in smell.

This breach between village-Arab and city-Arab is one of the basic factors of Middle East life today. While the Middle East is an area filled with conflict and diversity, despite all the talk of Arab unity, this is the conflict given greatest importance by experienced observers of social conditions in the Arab East today. In order to understand life in the Middle East of today one must first understand these two social entities—the village and the city.

Most reports of Arab city life describe two groups, the Westernized upper classes and the merchants on one hand, and howling, anti-Western mobs on the other. Most descriptions of village life go no further than observing that the most miserable man alive is the Egyptian fellah. What is more, most Western writers

Mr. Picton is an American who has for years lived and worked in the Middle East.

base their later conclusions about economics and politics on these hasty observations, and usually conclude by saying that the situation is hopeless and that Communism is inevitable. At one time these sketchy pictures of Middle Eastern life might have been enough for the American reader, but that time is now, fortunately or unfortunately, no more than a page in history.

IF AN AMERICAN views an Arab village for the first time he is most likely to take the view of my English friend. Filth and disease are everywhere in the rural Middle East. Medical facilities, though increasing at a tremendous rate in some areas, are woefully inadequate. Death rates, though declining rapidly, are still very much higher than in Europe and America. Actual starvation may be rare in the Middle East, but malnutrition and its host of concomitant maladies are widespread. The average life-span in the Arab world does not exceed forty years. And in order to keep body and soul together during these forty years the Arab is forced to work like an animal.

Economics is the key factor in Middle Eastern village life. It is, however, not the economics of which auto to buy, or the choice between two extra shirts instead of another pair of shoes. It is the economics of survival or non-survival. It is the economics of life—however meager—and the ever-present threat of death in its myriad oriental forms.

It takes an American some time to grasp this fact of survival in Middle Eastern life. We take life very much for granted and concentrate our thoughts on what standard of living we will attain, or in what direction our lives will move. These questions are very easily answered by the Middle Eastern peasant. His standard of living will be at the subsistence level no matter what he does. And he will spend his life on the same land his father and grandfather spent their lives on, and he will die on the same land they lived and died on.

When planting time comes it means a dawn to sunset workday for the Egyptian fellah. Cultivating, fertilizing and irrigating are brute tasks when the only power at hand is the sweat of the brow, an ass and a few paleolithic tools. As harvest time approaches the fellah moves to his field. If he didn't stand guard all night (after working all day) he would probably lose his half-acre crop to a thief. That is, if the crop had not already been destroyed by the numberless insects and pests which threaten it on every side. With all of these unseen (and for them often unknown and uncontrollable) forces around them, there is little wonder that the peasants are such utter fatalists.

Life to the poor peasants of the Arab world is a prize to be struggled for, and thus life deserves the fullest measure of enjoyment, once a man is fortunate enough to win that life over the many forces which seek to deprive him of it. Someone has said that life

to the Arabs is one long series of todays. We are alive today, thanks be to Allah, they would say. And, if Allah wills, we will be alive tomorrow, may Allah's name be praised. Let us live to the fullest today, therefore, and Allah, who has made everything possible, will care for us tomorrow.

This seems a miserable existence, and yet I've rarely run into what could be considered a miserable Arab peasant. Under the most appalling living conditions I have seen happiness and contentment. I have seen bodies wracked with disease and discomfort, but minds made serene by acceptance and made content by small pleasures like the kind word of a friend or the helping hand of a faithful wife or loyal son.

Life in a village is a truly communal thing. One is never alone. Each man is in the last analysis responsible to himself for his own survival, but the struggle always seems to be a communal one, and an Arab will never starve in his village as long as a neighbor has enough to keep his own head above water. Cairo, for example, is filled with Nubians. These people used to live along the Nile, southward from Aswan and over the border into Sudan. When the Aswan Dam (not the High Aswan Dam) was constructed about seventy years ago, the land of the Nubians was flooded by the dam's reservoir. And while the Nubians were paid for this land, very few were able to invest those funds in something that gave them the lasting income their land did.

Consequently, the Nubians soon found themselves without money as well as without land, and they began migrating to Cairo in search of work. In Cairo they have been employed as domestic help, cooks, messengers and the like. These people live in the city the way they did in their villages. The men of a particular village usually have their own café where they all congregate in the evenings. If one of their number gets sick or loses his job, the others have a fund, to which they all contribute, that will help their fellow villager until better times come.

The same community spirit exists in all Middle Eastern villages, if not always in such an organized way as with the Nubians. Another example of enduring community solidarity can be seen in the refugee camps which surround the borders of Israel. An experienced person can tell the area and even the village of the refugee women by the costumes they wear. Nearly eleven years have elapsed since the Arabs fled from their land in Palestine, but the refugees still crouch in their huts and speak of their villages and the friends and relations they used to know in the extended family which is the village.

Those who hope for a compromise resettlement plan for these peasants must not overlook the important human element which exists in this area. That element is the intense emotional tie which binds a man and his

family to their soil and to their neighbors who for centuries have shared their grim but not unhappy struggle for existence.

Superimposed on all these traditional social forces of family and community life, however, is the influence of the Western world. Almost without exception Western influence has tended to break down the old village culture, and a new form of Middle East life has been slowly developing. It is, of course, in the cities of the Arab world that this new culture has really taken root.

THE TYPICAL city of the Middle East is a sprawling, ever-spreading thing. It is, in fact, always difficult to say where the city ends and where the countryside begins, with Cairo and Baghdad the two best examples of this. The buildings in the center of the city are often of the most modern design, towering to levels not reached in most European cities. On the outskirts, the last houses of the city may be of corn stalks, mud or old gasoline cans. In between, the homes run the gamut from rickety four-story vermin nests, which frequently collapse with great loss of life, to rather picturesque, if sometimes slightly shabby, buildings which remind one of Barcelona or Rome.

In most of the city live the recent "emancipates" from the village. These people work as messengers, servants and laborers during the day, and at night the men fill the coffee shops, patriotically named "Victory," "Arab Glory," "Liberty," etc. Each coffee shop has a radio which sends out a continuous stream of Arab music, news reports and political commentaries.

In the summer, poor families pour out of the stench of the native quarters and spread themselves in the public gardens or along some river or sea until their homes cool off, generally around midnight. Men and boys selling peanuts, salted pumpkin seeds, cheese and hard boiled eggs elbow their way through the crowds. Meanwhile, conversation goes on vigorously in the innumerable coffee shops. For those who can afford it there are private clubs—some very simple, dusty affairs and others quite plush, occupying a choice piece of ground where the air is cool in summer and where the star-filled night is still and quiet. An afternoon nap is customary everywhere in the Middle East, and the social activity of the evening usually lasts at least until midnight in the cities. In the villages nine o'clock is a late hour, but in the city, where electricity makes the night into day, the habits are different.

The great mass of these semi-literate city people bear great resemblance in custom and appearance to their village compatriots. The first generation, especially, usually maintain the simplicity of rural life. But the second generation of this urban mass provide a different picture. They are usually better fed and frequently have more free time to roam around than the youths in the villages have. These city-born Arabs

usually have more education and they are rarely seen without a newspaper poking out of a pocket. They frequently wear cheap European clothes in the evening—often with a gaudy American-like sport shirt—as they make their rounds of the bright-lighted sections of town. These young men—the girls are still kept close to home—are always ready volunteers for any sort of demonstration. They have read the newspapers and digested the commentaries heard over the Voice of the Arabs. They have perceived the "sinister maneuvers of the Western imperialists" and they are ready to wreak vengeance on some Greek grocer if the signal is given. They are usually prepared to believe that their leaders have been guilty of the worst fraud, scandal or treason.

THESE PEOPLE I have just spoken of—the simple people who have migrated to the big towns carrying with them their rural simplicity, and their barely literate offspring, who wander between the backwardness of the village and the worldliness gained from a low type of popular press—can be considered the lowest class, socially and economically.

Above this group is the emerging middle class of the Arab world. They have probably completed secondary school and very often the middle class family has at least one of its members in an overcrowded state university or at the military academy. (They wear pajamas only in the house, in contrast to the lower group who think nothing of stalking down a main thoroughfare in blazing pink and green striped pajamas.) The army officers are being drawn from this emerging middle class, and the engineers, accountants, civil servants, lawyers and even doctors. They spend their time in private clubs, movie houses, or just strolling around the streets. They too consume political news gleaned from newspapers and radios.

The middle class is strongly affected by two important ideas. They are seeking to improve their own personal position in the society and they are concerned with improving the political importance and political power of the Arabs in the Middle East and in the world. Real Arab Nationalism—that responsible



awareness of a national entity—has its strongest roots in this group of people.

Egyptians of the middle class are not likely to slaughter foreigners in the street. They might very well demonstrate while at the university, and if things get desperate enough, as they did in Beirut, they might resort to violent measures. But this is only when conditions get extreme. The howling mobs are made up of the semi-literates from the lowest, filthiest quarters of the city. Revolutions are directed and carried out by the middle class, but as far as mob violence is concerned, the worse that can be said against the middle class is that its members sometimes tacitly condone what their ignorant fellow countrymen do. But those of the middle class often feel much closer emotionally to the masses than did the aristocrats who used to govern Arab countries. As a result, they often see primitive mob action as besmirching the honor of the middle class and also the honor of the respectable national entities the middle class has placed so much stake in.

The upper-class landowners of the Middle East are gradually losing their leadership in the area. Today's upper class live very Western-like lives. They have a big house or apartment in the city and an even bigger one on their rural land, but these country houses which once held the entire family are not used much now. Agents take care of the land while the family remains in the city with their friends in the international community.

The sons of these landowners have been going to Europe and to America for schooling for years. Even the daughters of these wealthy families are going abroad now. They all speak foreign languages extremely well. As a result, it is from this group that foreigners often get most of their information about the Middle East. But it is the middle class that is becoming increasingly more important in the Middle East.

The middle class is determined to break down the system which kept their fathers in poorly paid clerks' jobs. But in the change they bring about they will not separate themselves either from the mass below them or the elite above them. They seem intent on creating a national unity which will provide their families with a few of the decencies they have long observed European and American families enjoying. This is a rather happy, peaceful prospect to look forward to in the Middle East. After what has taken place in the area during the past ten years it seems impossible that things could smooth out the way they have just been described. However, it is in the middle class that I place my hope. If this group is successful it will bring to bear the force and the remedies which are needed to control and uplift the masses. They will also provide a national consciousness that will gather all groups together into integrated societies capable of holding their place in the modern world.

THE STAGE

IN PERSON

THERE IS a certain wistful pathos to those posters of "The Marriage-Go-Round" which announce the appearance of Mr. Charles Boyer and Miss Claudette Colbert "in person"; they may claim, as it were, so little else. Nor is one to misjudge the central draw of the event, to which clarity an elaborate stratagem of dual programs—Miss Colbert glowing on the one, Mr. Boyer ironic on the other—and an alternating shuttle of billing, testify. No play, of course, could survive such incontrovertible assertion of its insignificance, and Mr. Leslie Stevens' comedy, for all that it has become the latest fat cat on Broadway, is hardly the exception.

Mr. Stevens, whose choice of subject is nothing if not eclectic—Spanish culture in "Bullfight," the medieval *droit du seigneur* in "The Lovers"—conceivably imagined for "The Marriage-Go-Round" some Shavian variation on the rites of monogamy; his personages take alternately to lecterns and comment with desperate gaiety on domestic impulses and perils. This academic homage registered, they take up the real business at hand, which is Mr. Boyer's considered seduction by a blonde Viking of exalted biological convictions. To make of this substance, however, the intellectual caprice it dimly attempts, one would need be, as Eliot said of Byron, *genuinely* disreputable. Mr. Stevens smarms and smuts about sex, but when the chips are down, he calls sentiment pattering into this threatened world. In its illusion of audacity, its adolescent provocation and very real fatigue, "The Marriage-Go-Round" exposes again that anxious American relief we enjoy in having our cake and eating it too.

Mr. Boyer and Miss Colbert have arrived at that point of human fortunes when, like Mr. Archibald MacLeish's globed fruit, palpable if not mute, they need no longer mean, but be. Mr. Boyer's suavity and *politesse* cover what I rather suspect is weariness with an exhausted image of romantic allure. There is one passage of troubled fluff in "The Marriage-Go-Round" when he must register some transient doubt or complexity; the sharply deeper reality of the moment suggests what further aspects of experience Mr. Boyer might have explored, had the temper of his personality or of his time been more exacting. All of Miss Colbert's talent rests in her quality: of poise, a little wry; of equity and humor; above all, of rational sensuality, that leavening and measure so specifically French. Miss Colbert brings all of this to a level of impressive *chic*. Neither performance has any significance as art, or as the execution of an intricate design, but as statements

of personality, they will doubtless have their place in the history of contemporary feeling. (*At the Plymouth.*)

RICHARD HAYES.

THE SCREEN

LAUGHTER HOLDING BOTH HIS SIDES

WHEN I READ the recent Air Force report on the type of gloves best suited to button pushing, all I could think of was Jacques Tati's film, "My Uncle, Mr. Hulot." Tati would no doubt have been delighted that the Air Force was making such a study, and he would have been gleefully fascinated by its conclusion; because that is exactly what this new French film is about: life in the push-button era. As producer, director and co-author of "My Uncle, Mr. Hulot," Tati has a hilarious time kidding today's modern gadgets.

In making his protest, Tati stacks the cards somewhat in favor of old order charm, dishevelment and inconvenience. And during the course of the film's slight story, which is almost without formal plot, Tati effectively contrasts the old and the new. He himself plays Mr. Hulot, the same bumbling character who wreaked such havoc at a seaside resort in

"Mr. Hulot's Holiday." Mr. Hulot, living in a quaint and musty district of a French city, where the neighbors are friendly but distinctly disorganized, climbs an absurd stairway to get to his top-floor apartment; his sister, living with her inventor-husband and little boy in a modern house in a new section of the city, is practically a slave to the push-buttons that open the front gate, turn on the fish fountain and regulate the spick-and-span kitchen. Although the seven-year-old is rather cool toward his parents, who are absorbed in their functional house and mechanical routine, he adores his generous, gauche Uncle Hulot who takes him on a spree once a week and showers him with warmth and fun.

All in all M. Tati has succeeded in making a very amusing movie. He has handled well his large cast of non-professional actors, many of whom (like the streetsweeper who never really sweeps) add only a small bit to the whole that is hilarious. Although the film has helpful subtitles, most of the jokes are visual; and in many cases the pictorials are effectively accompanied by lively music and sounds.

"My Uncle" may often remind viewers of Chaplin's films, especially "Modern Times," but Tati has a brand of humor all his own. Lamenting the absence of warmth in modern living, "My Uncle, Mr. Hulot" is a touch more sad and poignant than either of Tati's previous movies, "Mr. Hulot's Holiday" and "Jour de Fête," but its individual scenes are not any less laugh-provoking.

MUCH MORE typical of the kind of film that France has been sending over lately is "What Price Murder." This sordid thriller tells the story of a handsome young schemer (Henri Vidal) who marries a very wealthy, middle-aged widow (Isa Miranda). Soon disgusted with her and his tag as "Cinderella Man," he has an affair with her flashy secretary, another conniver who helps him in his diabolical plan to dispose of his wife. Director Henri Verneuil has decorated the unsavory plot with some beautiful background scenes of Côte d'Azur and Venice and some frankly sensuous scenes in bedroom, beach house and gondola. With the three leads coming to no good end, one is indeed led to wonder what price murder—and what price movie.

A NEW Hollywood film also falls into the cliché trap. "In Love and War" follows three Marines on leave in San Francisco before shipping out and then in battle on a Pacific Island. Each one has his full quota of problems. Jeffrey Hunter, as a sergeant who's seen plenty of action, comes home to find that his fiancée (Hope Lange) is pregnant, so he marries her. Bradford Dillman, as an intellectual type, comes home to argue with his wealthy father, who thinks

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he's a fool for enlisting, and with his rich, spoiled fiancée (Dana Wynter), who's going to the dogs. Robert Wagner, as an Irish kid from the slums, comes home to be kind to his mother, row with his stepfather, and have a date with an old flame (Sheree North) who's not very responsive.

Perhaps the only interesting thing about these San Francisco scenes is that Dillman, the rich boy, and France Nuyen, as an attractive Eurasian, shyly fall in love, and the war scenes that follow are dull and unoriginal. The picture's one bright spot falls to Mort Sahl, who appears in a few of the Pacific scenes and kids whatever serious and social-conscious note the film is meant to have. With bombs bursting over head and through the rockets' red glare, Sahl answers the ringing phone in his dug-out and says: "Good morning. This is World War II."

PHILIP T. HARTUNG.

COMMUNICATIONS

"SPACE YEAR I"

Silver Spring, Md.

TO THE EDITORS: Mr. Carey's letter criticizing my article "Space Year I" [Oct. 24] raises a number of important issues, as well as some spurious ones. My aim was to discuss the scientific aspects of space research, and the results obtained to date. I could only indicate my position on other questions. This may have given rise to misunderstandings, but I am convinced that the issue between Mr. Carey and myself goes beyond these.

Mr. Carey uses the delightful device of lumping me with "space enthusiasts" whose fancied position he proceeds to describe. This saves him the trouble of reading my article and also allows him to knock down a straw man. I am paraphrased as saying that "the dichotomy between good and bad . . . is a false one. . ." Mr. Carey does this by distorting my text and suppressing my quotation marks, thus radically changing the point. His comments about biology and ecology are imprecise, and in any case irrelevant. Because I am lumped with his "space enthusiasts," I can be made to favor colonization of the planets, which is nonsense. Few people believe seriously that any planet in the solar system besides the earth is habitable. Also, few will argue seriously that it is more important to "see the other side of the moon" than to feed the hungry and clothe the naked. The point, however, is that in our era of history, technological progress proceeds very rapidly, pushed along by forces over which we have little control. This technological progress will eventually enable us to feed the hungry and clothe the naked, but it will also enable us to fly to the moon.

The real argument between us concerns the meaning of progress. I do not subscribe to the theory of "indefinite mechanical progress" imputed to me. But I reject emphatically the opposite extremist position which views with suspicion and hostility all kinds of human progress. It seems to me that man is entering a new epoch of human history which may be comparable to the epoch of the Roman Empire or that of Christian Europe. This new epoch will probably be highly technological. It will also be completely pagan and inhuman unless Christians can work out for themselves a better theology about progress. Such a theology is already emerging, and various landmarks of its development can be found in the writings of the Popes from Leo XIII on, of Cardinal Suhard, Fathers Teilhard de Chardin, Ong, Daniélou and others. The basic spiritual decision in this matter was in fact taken at the First Council of Jerusalem. This theology of progress is by no means fully worked out, and perhaps, because of its subject matter, may never achieve the perfection of other branches of theology.

To avoid further misunderstanding, let me touch briefly on the key points this theology seems to assert. First of all, man is fallen and redeemed; man is prone to evil but able to do good. (One must reject here the idea of the corruption of man's nature.) Next, the human and the inanimate universe move through history toward God. The movement may be slow and paradoxical (it seems particularly so in our age), but the direction of the movement is, I believe, guaranteed by the Incarnation. Finally, the role of the Church is one of witness and of leaven, more than one of critic and of judge. The Church must penetrate life and transform it. She must modify and humanize progress, spiritualize it, and give man a clear hierarchy of values.

A note should be added about the role which science and technology play in this theory. Science, a free and broad contemplation of the universe, oblivious of all thought of use and application, gives us knowledge of God through knowledge of His works. (This is the modern analogue of a most venerable approach to apologetics.)

Technology, an organized and deliberate use of thought and of the results of science, can give control over the non-human aspects of life, food, shelter, climate, geography.

Both science and technology are answers to the command of God to Adam to rule the creatures of the universe. This command was not rescinded by the Fall, only made more arduous ("In the sweat of thy face . . ."), and it is fully as binding as the other command ("Go into the world and teach all nations . . .").

To stand still in history is to lose all contact with reality, and would turn the Church into a self-imprisoned sect.

CHARLES M. HERZFELD.

Continuing the Judeo-Christian Dialogue

THE BRIDGE, Vol. III. Edited by John M. Oesterreicher. Pantheon. \$4.50.

By BERNARD G. MURCHLAND

THE JUDEO-CHRISTIAN studies that have been published for three consecutive years strike me as one of the more excellent scholarly projects in the country today. It is, moreover, a personal joy for me, an authentic intellectual experience, to encounter so generally competent a treatment of those truths that were formulated in the primitive consciousness of mankind and given their transcendental bearings within the stormy context of Jewish history—and which are, withal, the root truths of human destiny in any age.

The contents of Volume III maintain an already established excellence and variety. We find, for example, studies on "Social Thought in the Old Testament," "The Prophets: Bearers of the Word," "Jews, Christians and Moslems," and "Job and His Comforters."

In one of the two "Surveys" Father Edward Flannery discusses some theological aspects of the state of Israel. Does the establishment of such a state contradict scripture or tradition? "A study of the patristic and scriptural sources," Father Flannery says, "makes us conclude that the belief that the Jews could never regain their lost nationhood did not have its origin in Scripture or in dogmatic patristic tradition. Rather is it based on the writings of several of the Fathers of the later fourth century . . . who, unduly influenced by the dramatic failure of Julian the Apostate to reconstruct the Temple, interpreted certain texts of the Old and New Testament in the light of this event. . . ."

Asking whether or not the state of Israel is a fulfillment of scriptural prophecies, the author notes: "Israel's singularity remains, her election has not been completely withdrawn. She is destined to remain a people apart in order to serve in the final act of mankind's

salvation. Thus her exile cannot be ended on a merely secular level; Zionism, assimilationism, or any other human measure can never be adequate to the task of Israel's redemption. Her redemption must be a spiritual event."

In the second "Survey," entitled "Light in Darkness," Elizabeth Orsten indicates some of the rays of light—courage, hope and repentance—that cut through the dark night of the Nazi persecution of the Jews. She does this most effectively by recording a lengthy and deeply moving testimony of one Jew's manifesto of faith (in letter form) before the threat of extinction.

This edition of the *Bridge* is, as it were, dedicated to Martin Buber and the most important studies, although few in number, concern him. Father Oesterreicher, in his introduction, offers his respects, not to a frequently hailed prophet, but to a "searcher after truth." His respect is contained by some sharp disagreements which, from a strictly dogmatic point of view, are well taken although for the purposes of faithful dialogue perhaps less so. Buber, he says, has not only shortened "the leg of the Torah . . . but cut it to the little stump of an inward call." And, "as his words stand, his biblical humanism is neither true to the Bible nor true to the real human situation." I am a little suspicious of any attempt to make a final, categorical judgment upon Buber's peculiar assessment of reality. What he says can, up to a point, be precisely disengaged from the symbolic, mystical nature of his style of thought and expression. But only up to a point. Buber possesses that specifically Jewish manner of perceiving the complexity and dynamism of reality while Catholic intellectuals, by comparison, tend to simplification and a more static interpretation. I am not interested at this point in discussing why this might be so. But it seems worth noting that the former attitude seems to correspond much more accurately to our situation.

In Father Oesterreicher's exceptionally clear and detailed study, "The Hasidic Movement," where he refers frequently to Buber, we read: "The demand that each one grasp God's glory anew, unless it is no more than an impassioned plea for intimacy of faith, runs counter to Scripture. For it is the singular strength of biblical faith that, since God has spoken, no man need start afresh; that what God revealed to and through the patriarchs, prophets, and apostles, revealed in and through Jesus, is revealed to me, and all that is required of me is to hear and respond. . . ." While in an important sense this is true, it is, in a more important sense, dangerously static. Past arguments, as someone has said, are no apology for Christian living today. What might be called the dynamic actuality of God has been the concern of much recent philosophy and theology.

And it does seem beyond doubt that the past must be vitalized in the present, within the personal and interior attitudes of each individual Christian. This is one of the demands of a living faith over a merely historical faith. God has spoken; but He ever speaks. Part of the Christian vocation, it seems to me, is to be alert for the new revelations (small "r") and the new signs that translate the Divine reality concretely in every age. The Redemption is both a precise *act*, accomplished at a decisive moment in history and a continuing divine *activity*, co-extensive with history. The *act* is the death of Christ on the Cross. The *activity* is the incessant, and very fresh and spontaneous, appeal of the Resurrected to the heart of man.

There is, thus, an authentic renewal. The expectation, furthermore, which is stretched between the First and Second Coming must, it would seem, generate some religious tension and bears a rather pointed, if not exactly parallel, resemblance to the here-and-now urgency of Buber's theology.

Mr. McDermott's study, "Martin Buber's I-Thou Philosophy," I found to be a straight and quite enlightening analysis, with little or no attempt to assess that philosophy in Christian or other terms. But Father Sloyan's "Buber and the Significance of Jesus," indicated to me another instance of a possible failure to grasp the complexities at issue. One grants that Buber's notion of Christ is unacceptable to the Christian. But the divergence of points of view in this matter might profitably be incorporated in fruitful dialogue. Father Sloyan adopts a style of direct address that will strike some as apologetics rather than dialogue—a kind of confrontation that risks whittling away the deeper levels of meaning implied in the initial differences.

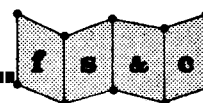
I wonder if an exchange of opinion of this nature can be carried on within a strictly theological framework. It seems that a broader ontological basis would be desirable, not only because a theology that does not present its ontological credentials is rightly suspect, but also because in the area of philosophy many matters that otherwise become stumbling blocks can become stepping stones to higher plateaus of agreement from which can be seen, in clearer perspective, the contours of the differences.

Three book reviews (of Toynbee's *An Historian's Approach to Religion*, Abba Hillel Silver's *Where Judaism Differed*, and Philip Friedman's *Their Brothers' Keepers*) round out this volume of studies. Worthy of special mention, too, is Barry Ulanov's "Perspectives" piece on "Abraham Rattner, Painter of Anguish," complete with some striking reproductions of the artist's work.

I would like to reiterate, in conclusion, my general admiration for the superior quality of these year-books of Judeo-Christian studies. And perhaps it might be suggested that similar initiatives be launched in English in view of dialogues with scholars of still other faiths—the Moslems, for example, or one or another of the Oriental religions which are presently undergoing revitalization.

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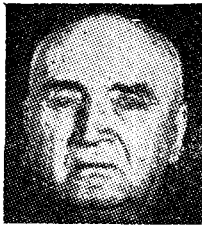
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FOR THE LIFE OF ME. By Robert Briscoe with Alden Hatch. Little, Brown. \$5.

By VIVIAN MERCIER

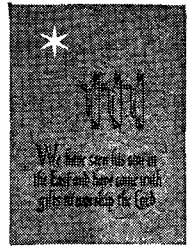
THE AMERICAN people were greatly impressed, in 1956-7, by the fact that Robert Briscoe was simultaneously Lord Mayor of Dublin and a Jew; I can't say that I shared either their surprise at the fact or their respect for the office. When my great-great-grandfather Mark Bloxham was Lord Mayor, in 1816-7, few people thought much of the job; even so, a Jew might then have stood a better chance of getting it than a Roman Catholic. Catholic Emancipation was still a dozen years off.

The surprising fact, really, was that Mr. Briscoe had not been elected Lord Mayor long before. After all, he had been a member of the Dublin Corporation (city council) for twenty-five years, during which time several less popular and less able men had held the annual office. More significant, he had retained his seat in the Dáil (the lower but more powerful house of the Irish legislature) for nearly thirty years, though not one per cent of the Irish population is of Jewish faith. Membership in the Dáil entails more power, if not more prestige, than the mayoralty, since Dublin is actually run by the City Manager.

Nationalism in Ireland has often proved an even stronger force than religion; generations of Irish rebels have risked or incurred excommunication for love of country. If the Irish people are convinced of his patriotism, a Protestant or a Jew can hold the highest offices in the land. Dr. Douglas Hyde, the famous Gaelic scholar who became the first President of Ireland, was a Protestant, as were Parnell, Wolfe Tone, and other leaders of the Irish people.

Mr. Briscoe demonstrated his selfless love of country in the most conclusive way. He left a good business here in 1917 to return to Ireland and take part in the fight

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against England; in 1922 he chose the unpopular side—De Valera's—in the Civil War and risked his life all over again. With such a record a far less genial and extroverted man than Robert Briscoe, and one less well-known for looking after his constituents, might long hold a safe seat in the Dáil.

Mr. Briscoe's business experience and his knowledge of the German language and people specially fitted him for buying arms in Germany and smuggling them to the Irish Republican Army. Later he tried to uphold De Valera's cause in New York—with the help of Michael O'Brien, brother of novelist Kate—negotiated trade agreements between Ireland and the Nazis, strove to persuade pre-war Poland to speed Polish Jews to Palestine, sought funds in the U.S. and South Africa to aid illegal immigration into Palestine, and accompanied De Valera on a trip to the new state of Israel. He advised the Irgun how to carry on a terrorist campaign and also how to stop it by becoming a constitutional party, as De Valera and his followers had done. It is said, though not in this book, that he helped make Dan Breen's *My Fight for Irish Freedom* the training manual of the Israeli guerrillas.

As if to prove the superiority of environment over heredity, this book shows that Mr. Briscoe possesses an explosive Irish temper, a taste for Irish whiskey, and a characteristically irreverent Irish sense of humor. He tells some very good stories, long and short, of which the longest, if not the best, is called "Saving the Soul of Charley McGuinness." McGuinness was the captain of a gun-running ship, a man with many sins on his conscience, who had not been to confession for fourteen years. In order not to endanger Charley's immortal soul as well as his body, Mr. Briscoe was instructed by the I.R.A. to see that the captain embarked on his next voyage in a state of grace. The ingenious Briscoe accomplished his mission—not without difficulty, however.

On the first day of his triumphal American tour last year, Lord Mayor Briscoe told newspapermen,

"I am *not* here to enact a revival of 'Abie's Irish Rose.'" In the same way, Mr. Briscoe's book, for all its laughter and exaggeration, retains a basic dignity. Here is a man who loves his country and has earned the right to say so: one who, by risking his life often for extremist doctrines, has earned the right to preach peace and moderation, in Ireland and elsewhere.

Unfortunately, feeling strongly about one's country's history does not make one infallible on the sub-

ject. When Mr. Briscoe speaks of "Wolfe Tone leading his scytheswinging peasants in 1798" or of the "Catholic Emancipation Act in 1832," he is making the kind of error that Alden Hatch was surely hired to help him avoid.

Irishmen make good priests, good policemen and even good politicians, because they regard other human beings as ends rather than means. An Irishman's personal loyalties ennoble him more than his often appalling personal hatreds



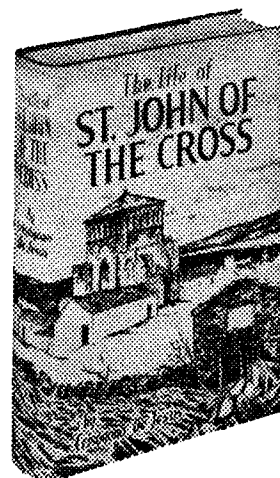
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A Civilized Voice

AT HOME: MEMOIRS. By William Plomer. Noonday. \$3.75.

By MAX COSMAN

MR. PLOMER cannot be ac-
cused of egocentric haste as
autobiographer. It took him some
seventeen years, counting from
1926, the date of his first book, to
get out *Double Lives*. It has taken
him almost that long to publish
At Home, the sequel before us.

A writer of memoirs, especially
of the literary kind, must have "a
voice," a term Mr. Plomer has ap-
plied to a clerical ancestor who was
clapped into the Tower for criticiz-
ing Henry VIII. Mr. Plomer may
have no Henry VIII but he does
have a voice. It is not that of a
bookman like Frank Swinnerton's
in *Background with Chorus*, nor
that of a chatty belletrist like David
Garnett's in *Flowers of the Forest*.
Nor is it that of a man of letters in-
volved to the quick in groups and
movements like John Lehmann's
in *The Whispering Gallery*.

Though touched with elements of
these, it is still idiosyncratic: the
voice of one unforced by time and
need to write anything but that
which is related to himself or to
work already done; in brief, the
voice of a gentleman writer. This
of course means that Mr. Plomer is
nice in his discriminations yet strong
with experienced life, conditioned
by reticences yet capable of present-
ing squeamish matters like social
changes in Bayswater, someone's
murder of an attractive landlady, or
his own hyperthyroid condition in
the War.

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lating as they are, nor those of journeys and adjustments that hold us as much as do his vignettes of celebrities, Bloomsbury genus among others. Done with that cross between seriousness and irony which he has tried out so well in his ballads—Virginia Woolf is notably excepted from the treatment—he limns some notably unpious cartoons. Here's the one of Lytton Strachey: "A glint came into his eyes, the brain was on the move as swiftly as a bat, with something of the radar-like sensitivity of a bat, and when he spoke it was sometimes in the voice of a bat." And that of a doyen of art: "Fry's own pictures have generally seemed to me saddish confections like those of an amateur cook with sound training and well tried recipes but without the least spark of inspiration."

Tonic commonly, Mr. Plomer's voice can, when it has to, take on chromatic quality. It does so when it comes to deal with such topics as religion and country. One then gets a new though not unexpected phase of Mr. Plomer, that of commitment. Thus, though he does not deny "the merits of other than Christian forms of religion," he prefers, as he says, the Church of England because of its "peculiar appropriateness to a civilized disposition." In like manner, though he is unequivocal about the necessity of an entirely fresh attitude to other races and lands, he still makes his closing sentence a tribute to "England," "English civilization," and "English, men, women, and children." The native is indeed come home.

Some time ago, in a letter to readers in this country, E. M. Forster asked plaintively, "Why, dear America, do you not read William Plomer more?" *At Home* is apt to bring about the consummation Mr. Forster devoutly wishes.

REVIEWERS

Father Bernard G. Murchland, C.S.C., is a member of the editorial staff of Fides Publishers.

Vivian Mercier, a member of the faculty of City College, New York, is a specialist in Irish studies.

Max Cosman writes for numerous critical and scholarly journals.

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I find that it is not possible for me to give adequate praise to *Worship* in the space allotted. It is sound and scholarly—but at the same time lively and direct. Probably most of its readers are priests, but it is written and edited for all Catholics.

The subject matter and purpose of the magazine do not vary from issue to issue: *Worship* is published to help people understand the Mass and the sacraments. Yet there is tremendous variety in its pages; perhaps the first and possibly the most valuable educational experience one gets from it is the realization of the ties between liturgy and life.

Worship treats of the social order, religious sociology, music, art, and architecture, of the psychology of modern man, the meaning of sacrifice, liturgical reforms, and of the participation of the laity in the prayer-life of the Church.

I said it was for "all Catholics," but there must be a reservation. Though *Worship* is "popular" in the sense of being non-technical, it asks serious work and some background of its readers. Given the work, the background could be derived (over a number of issues) from the magazine itself.

— Robert Hoyt in *The Kansas City—St. Joseph Register*

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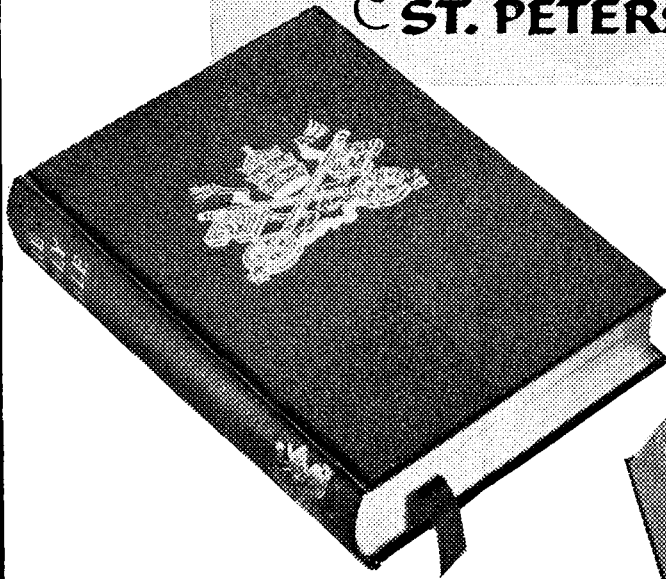
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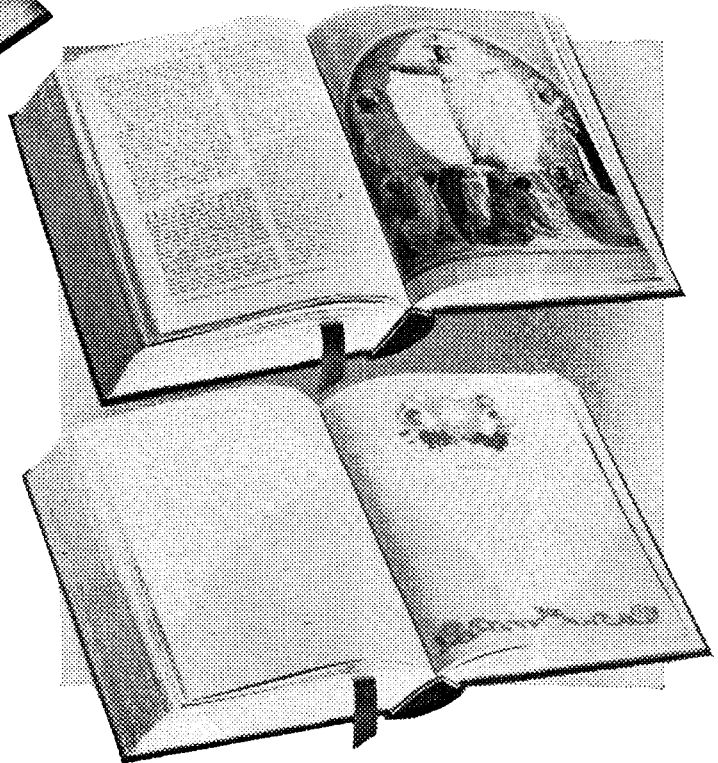
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